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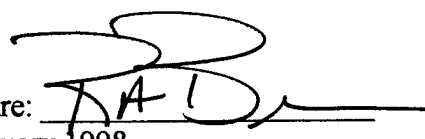
**Composite Warfare Commander Doctrine in the Age of  
the Joint Task Force: A New Approach**

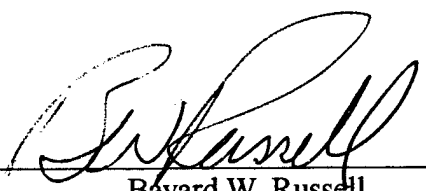
by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirement of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College of the Department of the Navy

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13 February 1998

  
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DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

19980708 067

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A

Approved for public release;  
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## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
2. Security Classification Authority:			
3. Declassification/Downgrading Schedule:			
4. Distribution/Availability of Report: DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.			
5. Name of Performing Organization: JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
6. Office Symbol: C		7. Address: NAVAL WAR COLLEGE 686 CUSHING ROAD NEWPORT, RI 02841-1207	
8. Title (Include Security Classification): Composite Warfare Commander Doctrine in the Age of the Joint Task Force: A New Approach (U)			
9. Personal Authors: Richard A. Brown, Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy			
10. Type of Report: FINAL		11. Date of Report: 13 February 1998	
12. Page Count: 24 (including cover and this page)			
13. Supplementary Notation: A paper submitted to the Faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.			
14. Ten key words that relate to your paper: Naval Command and Control, Composite Warfare Commander, Joint Warfare Commander doctrine			
15. Abstract:  "Forward...From the Sea" defined the Navy's strategic concept for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century as one in which naval forces, shaped for joint operations, will project power from the sea into the littoral regions of the globe. However, the Navy has not yet evolved its command and control doctrine to support its new strategic concept. The Composite Warfare Commander (CWC) doctrine, established to effectively manage blue water naval operations, continues to be the basis for Naval Command and Control in the littoral and joint environments. This doctrine does not, however, transition well into joint or combined operations nor does it adequately address command and control problems associated with a Navy-Marine Task Force, comprised of a Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) and an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), operating in the littoral. The development of a Joint Warfare Commander doctrine and the restructuring of the Navy-Marine Task Force command organization will retain the benefits of CWC, support the Navy's new strategic concept and allow the Navy-Marine Task Force to seamlessly transition to or establish a Joint Task Force.			
16. Distribution / Availability of Abstract:	Unclassified  X	Same As Rpt	DTIC Users
17. Abstract Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
18. Name of Responsible Individual: CHAIRMAN, JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
19. Telephone: 841-6461		20. Office Symbol: C	

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## **ABSTRACT**

“Forward...From the Sea” defined the Navy’s strategic concept for the 21<sup>st</sup> century as one in which naval forces, shaped for joint operations, will project power from the sea into the littoral regions of the globe. However, the Navy has not yet evolved its command and control doctrine to support its new strategic concept. The Composite Warfare Commander (CWC) doctrine, established to effectively manage blue water naval operations, continues to be the basis for Naval Command and Control in the littoral and joint environments. This doctrine does not, however, transition well into joint or combined operations nor does it adequately address command and control problems associated with a Navy-Marine Task Force, comprised of a Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) and an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), operating in the littoral. The development of a Joint Warfare Commander doctrine and the restructuring of the Navy-Marine Task Force command organization will retain the benefits of CWC, support the Navy’s new strategic concept and allow the Navy-Marine Task Force to seamlessly transition to or establish a Joint Task Force.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

“Forward...From the Sea” defined the Navy’s strategic concept for the 21<sup>st</sup> century as one in which naval forces, shaped for joint operations, will project power from the sea into the littoral regions of the globe. However, the Navy has not yet evolved its command and control doctrine to support its new strategic concept. The Composite Warfare Commander (CWC) doctrine, established to effectively manage blue water naval operations, continues to be the basis for Naval Command and Control in the littoral and joint environments. This doctrine does not, however, transition well into joint or combined operations nor does it adequately address command and control problems associated with a Navy-Marine Task Force, comprised of a Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) and an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), operating in the littoral. The development of a Joint Warfare Commander doctrine and the restructuring of the Navy-Marine Task Force command organization will retain the benefits of CWC, support the Navy’s new strategic concept and allow the Navy-Marine Task Force to seamlessly transition to or establish a Joint Task Force.

Before developing a new doctrine, fundamental principles must be established on which Naval Command and Control should be founded given the strategic concept formulated in “Forward...From the Sea”. Additionally, inadequacies of current CVBG-ARG command relationships must be presented and alternatives formulated. Utilizing 21<sup>st</sup> century command and control requirements in conjunction with an alternative amphibious command structure, the Joint Warfare Commander doctrine will be presented. This paper will then detail how Joint Warfare Commander doctrine can easily transition from operations in which the Navy-Marine Task Force serves as the enabling

Joint Task Force to operations in which it is part of a much larger joint force. Once the Joint Warfare Commander doctrine has been developed, its benefits to the Joint Force Commander will be presented. Finally, recommendations will be provided for developing, implementing, promulgating and evolving Naval Command and Control doctrine based on the JWC concept.

### **NAVAL COMMAND AND CONTROL IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

Throughout the Cold War, the U. S. Navy developed its Command and Control doctrine to support its blue water strategy. However, as naval forces become more the “primary channel through which the entire range of U.S. military capabilities can be exercised and demonstrated in multinational operations, then they have to be better able to do this.”<sup>1</sup> The Navy will “have to tear down some of the assumptions regarding specialization that have grown up over the years” and operate jointly—not just conduct joint exercises.<sup>2</sup> “Forward...From the Sea” states that “no single military service embodies all of the capabilities needed to respond to every situation and threat.”<sup>3</sup> Although the Navy-Marine Task Force may not embody all of the capabilities required to respond to a crisis, it is likely that it will be the CINC’s first credible force to arrive on the scene. However, because of the unique environment from which a Navy-Marine Task Force operates, certain principles, specific to operating naval forces at sea, must remain inherent in the Naval Command and Control doctrine of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are:

1. Unity of command
2. Delegation of authority

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<sup>1</sup> Admiral William A. Owens, USN (ret), “Naval Voyage to an Uncharted World,” Proceedings, December 1994, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Forward...From the Sea, p. 7.

3. Centralized planning/decentralized execution
4. Options for close control to control by negation
5. Tempo and firepower
6. Simultaneous combined arms operations
7. Flexibility<sup>4</sup>

The validity of these principles is well accepted throughout the naval service. However, given that today's Navy-Marine Task Forces will more probably be the enabling force at the scene of a crisis or become part of an existing Joint Task Force, Naval Command and Control doctrine must also

1. Integrate other service components into the Navy-Marine Task Force at any time during an operation;
2. Seamlessly integrate the Navy-Marine Task Force into an established Joint Task Force;
3. Mirror accepted Joint Task Force command structures;
4. Minimize reorganization within the Navy-Marine Task Force once operations are expanded.

A revised Naval Command and Control doctrine which embodies these principles must also clearly delineate the command relationships resulting from putting ground forces ashore.

### **AMPHIBIOUS COMMAND AND CONTROL**

A major stumbling block to revising Naval Command and Control for joint operations is the relationship between the CVBG and the ARG. Naval doctrine has slowly evolved such that unity of command is not maintained when a CVBG and an ARG are conducting amphibious operations. Specifically, doctrine has evolved such that the ARG commander is the supported commander and the CVBG commander is the supporting commander. In today's environment, when it is likely to be employed as one

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<sup>4</sup> Naval Doctrine Command, Naval Expeditionary Task Force Command and Control, July 1, 1996, p. 3-1-1.



force, there should be no distinction within the Navy-Marine Task Force between supported and supporting commanders. The Navy-Marine Task Force should respond as one force, operating under one commander. Unity of command dictates that the senior naval officer in command be the Commander of the Amphibious Task Force (CATF). The Amphibious Task force is thus analogous with the Navy-Marine Task Force and not the Amphibious Ready Group.

Given the example of a Navy-Marine Task Force comprised of one CVBG and one ARG, the Battle Group Commander should be CATF. Although recent papers, such as "Naval Expeditionary Task Force Command and Control" recognize the CVBG commander as CATF, they fail to expand the concept of unity of command outside of a one CVBG and one ARG task force. Additionally, they do not address the fact that amphibious command and control is not incorporated in CWC doctrine. The very real possibility exists of multiple CVBG's/ARG's conducting an amphibious operation comprised of a MEB or larger force (such as in Desert Storm). In this case, who should be CATF?

By applying the concept of unity of command, the answer is more readily apparent than most would believe. CATF must be the senior naval officer responsible for maritime operations. This concept clearly shows that if the ARG is part of a Joint Task Force and the ARG commander is the senior naval officer, then he/she should be CATF. If, however, the senior naval officer responsible for maritime operations within a Joint Task Force is the Battle Group Commander or Fleet Commander, then he/she must be CATF. Joint Pub 3-02 clearly states:

“JFCs establish command relationships and assign authority to subordinates based on the operational situation, the complexity of the mission, and the degree of control needed to ensure that strategic intent is satisfied. Combatant commanders may exercise combatant command of an ATF directly, or by delegation of authority, through:

- (a) A Service component commander;
- (b) A functional component commander, if established;
- (c) A commander of a subordinate unified command;
- (d) A commander of a joint task force who reports directly to the combatant commander.”<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, given that in most cases authority for amphibious operations will be delegated, CATF must simply be the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC). Application of this principle throughout varying levels of effort and force structures will ensure that the accepted guiding principles of Naval Command and Control are retained and the requirements for joint operations are achieved.

## **JOINT WARFARE COMMANDER DOCTRINE**

### **1. Building Block Approach**

As stated, the Navy-Marine Task Force could likely be the CINC’s enabling force once a crisis has developed—a force which will channel the rest of the services’ efforts as they join the fight. Given the guiding principles of Naval Command and Control presented earlier, Joint Warfare Commander (JWC) doctrine will ensure that the Navy-Marine Task Force is organized from inception as a JTF and will support future joint operations. The basic JWC organization for a Navy-Marine Task Force is developed from the following assumptions:

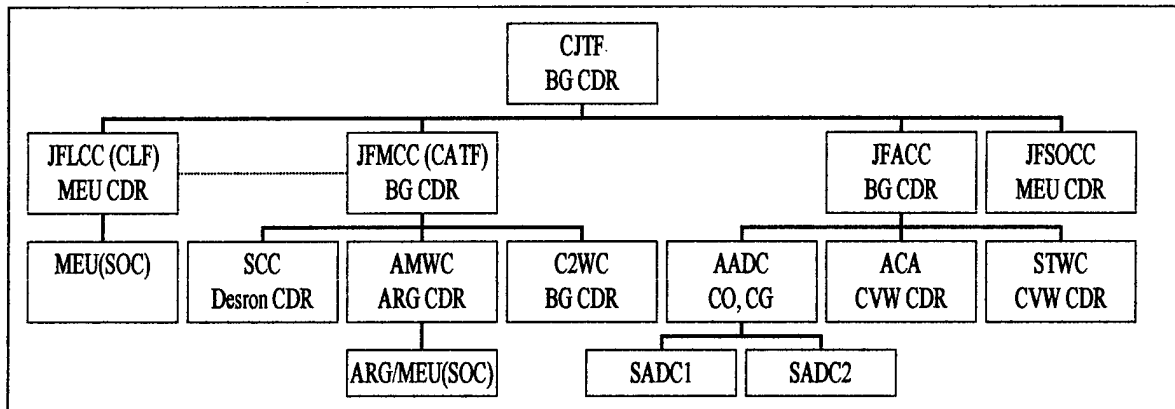
1. The Navy-Marine Task force could be the enabling force on the scene of a crisis;

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<sup>5</sup> Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations. Joint Pub 3-02, October 8, 1992, pp. II-1-II-2.

2. The Navy-Marine Task Force is comprised of one CVBG and one ARG/MEU(SOC);
3. Operations commence with only those forces allocated to the forward deployed Navy-Marine Task Force with additional joint forces arriving in theater soon.

The following Joint Warfare Command organization is developed and can be the building block from which all other JTF's are expanded:



**Figure 1: Navy-Marine Task Force organized as a Joint Task Force**

Although it at first appears in Figure 1 that the Battle Group Commander is overburdened with numerous duties (Joint Task Force Commander, Joint Force Maritime Component Commander, and Joint Force Air Component Commander), the organization in this exact form would only be used in an environment in which the Navy-Marine Task Force, supplemented with few additional joint forces, responds to a crisis. In reality, the proposed JWC organization functions not much differently than how Navy-Marine Task Forces currently operate (with the notable exception that the Battle Group Commander is formally recognized as CATF). So what is the purpose of organizing in this manner?

Organizing the Navy-Marine Task Force under the JWC doctrine builds the mind set within the force for joint operations. It establishes the foundation of joint command

relationships and lines of control based on function and warfare area without the loss of the unique capabilities CWC brings to the force. For example, under CWC doctrine, the Air Warfare Commander (AWC) and the Strike Warfare Commander (STWC) report to the Battle Group Commander as CWC. Under JWC doctrine, they report to the Battle Group Commander as JFACC. This at first might appear nothing more than a shuffling of titles given that their duties are the same, but the implications are wide reaching, especially when the Battle Group Commander is not JFMCC or JFACC.

In the area of air defense and airspace control, battle groups have wrestled with the command and control problems created when the battle group joins a Joint Task Force. Specifically, air defense expertise resides normally with the AWC and airspace control resides with the Carrier Airwing Commander. However, when a battle group joins a Joint Task Force, JFACC is normally the Area Air Defense Commander (AADC) and the Airspace Control Authority (ACA).<sup>6</sup> The AADC can subsequently subdivide air defense among Regional Air Defense Commanders (RADCC). If the AWC then becomes the RADCC (which typically happens under CWC doctrine), does he/she then report directly to AADC and thus bypass the Battle Group Commander who is ultimately responsible for air defense in the maritime region? The obvious answer is no. However, CWC does not easily provide a solution. JWC simply acknowledges that the Battle Group Commander will always be responsible for air defense and air space control within the maritime region. It is therefore reasonable for the Battle Group Commander, as JFACC, under the basic JWC concept, to delegate AADC to the battle group AWC and ACA to the Carrier Airwing Commander. This concept fits nicely within the Naval

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<sup>6</sup> Doctrine for Joint Airspace Control in the Combat Zone. Joint Pub 3-52, July 22, 1995, p. II-1.

Command and Control principles of unity of command, delegation of authority, centralized planning/decentralized execution, and options for close control to control by negation while supporting accepted joint command relationships. A similar argument is made for the STWC to be located under JFACC because strike warfare involves aircraft and cruise missiles flying in the airspace for which JFACC is responsible.

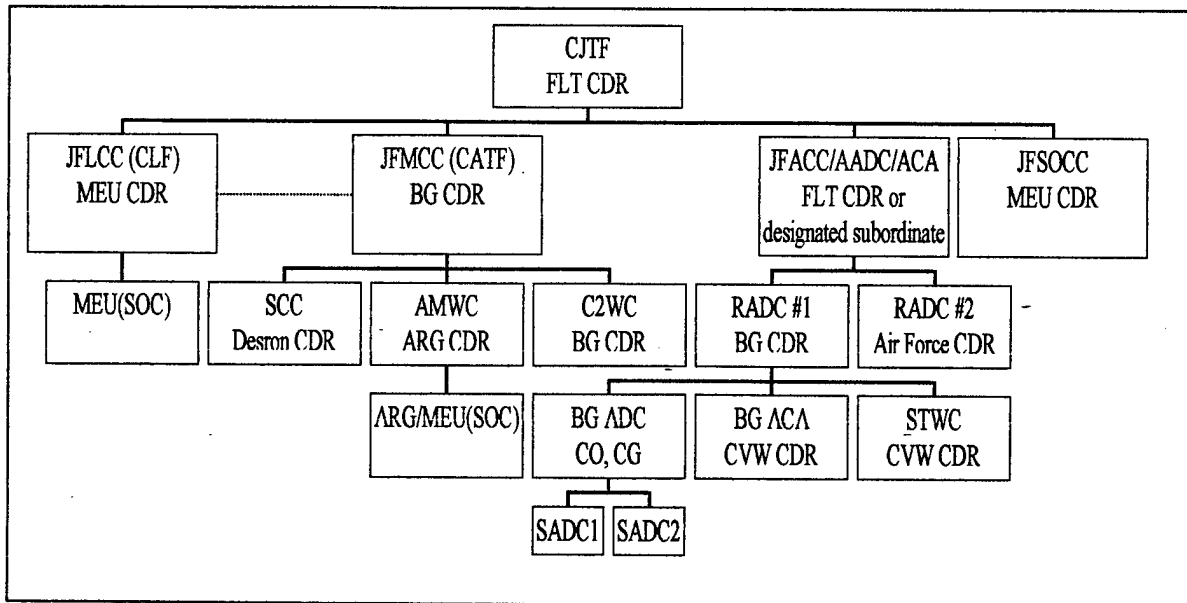
JWC doctrine also recognizes the important relationship between the Commander, Landing Forces (CLF) and the Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF). As will be seen, regardless of the level of command in a JTF, CLF and CATF remain coequals. This command organization does not in anyway lessen the importance of the ARG Commander. The ARG Commander, as the Amphibious Warfare Commander (AMWC), will be directly responsible for the execution of an amphibious landing. AMWC's duties are analogous to those of the other warfare commanders such as the Sea Combatant Commander (SCC) and the Command and Control Warfare Commander (C2WC).

## **2. Expanding the Basic JWC Organization**

Given the basic JWC structure, let us explore the changes resulting within the Navy-Marine Task Force in which a JTF is established to respond to a small regional crisis. The following assumptions are established:

1. A Fleet Commander (or equivalent) is CJTF;
2. The Navy-Marine Task Force is comprised of one CVBG and one ARG/MEU(SOC);
3. The Navy-Marine Task Force encompass the preponderance of air assets, however, Air Force assets are also allocated;
4. JFACC is established afloat on the LCC (CTJF's flagship) .

Figure 2 is the resulting Joint Task Force organization:



**Figure 2: JTF under a Fleet Commander/Navy-Marine Task Force providing majority of forces.**

A significant change from the basic JWC organization is that JFACC retains duties as AADC and ACA. Because JFACC is established on the LCC vice the carrier, the Battle Group Commander can no longer perform duties as JFACC. This is commensurate with the fact that a battle group staff (even though supported by the AWC and air wing) cannot efficiently perform JFACC duties given this level of effort and its responsibilities as CATF and JFMCC. In this situation, JFACC will either be the Fleet Commander or be stood-up with a fly-away staff (Battle Group Commander level). Regardless, the reorganization at the Navy-Marine Task Force level is minimal—duties and command relationships remain the same within the Navy-Marine Task Force and are organized along accepted JTF guidelines.

The Battle Group Commander becomes the RADC for the designated maritime region (this will also include a portion of the land region designated for amphibious operations). The basic JWC organization will support the Battle Group Commander in

that the AWC now becomes the Battle Group Air Defense Commander (BGADC) and the Airwing Commander becomes the Battle Group Air Space Control Authority (BGACA).

When additional forces join the Joint Task Force (Army and Special Operations Forces), the JFLCC and JFSOCC duties will eventually shift to those commanders which command the preponderance of forces. The MEU(SOC) will fall under the JFLCC once ashore (the MEU(SOC) Commander will remain CLF during the amphibious landing) and organic Navy-Marine Task Force Special Operations Forces will be re-assimilated. Additionally, if the Air Force sufficiently builds air forces in the region, a JFACC shift from afloat to ashore could occur with the Air Force General assuming duties as JFACC. The Navy-Marine Task Force air defense organization will experience no change. The flexibility that JWC doctrine allows becomes readily apparent when the level of effort is at the Joint Force Commander level and multiple CVBG's and ARG's are employed in the conflict.

### **3. Joint Warfare Commander Doctrine in a Joint Force**

The level of effort required to respond to a crisis might be such that a Joint Task Force is inadequate and the CINC will directly command a Joint Force (Desert Storm serves as an example). How then does the JWC doctrine fit into a Joint Force? Let us examine one possible organization under the following assumptions:

1. The Joint Force Commander (JFC) is the CINC;
2. Army Forces are at a Corps level commanded by a USA LGEN (JFLCC);
3. Air Forces at a Wing level commanded by a USAF LGEN (JFACC);
4. Maritime forces consisting of at least two CVBG's/ARG's commanded by a Fleet Commander, USN VADM (JFMCC);
5. A MEF size amphibious force embarked in the ARG's (some forces may already be ashore) and commanded by USMC LGEN;

6. Sub-unified Special Operations Commander serves as JFSOCC.

Figure 3 is a possible Joint Force organization. From the Navy-Marine Task Force perspective, command and control reorganization is minimized from the basic JWC organization developed in Figure 1.

Given the number and types of forces employed in the Joint Force, the Fleet Commander becomes the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander and CATF. CLF reports directly to the JFC and is a coequal of JFMCC/CATF. This command relationship is in keeping with current amphibious doctrine.

Although the logical progression of command and control in air defense might suggest that the Fleet Commander become the RADC for the maritime region (similar to the Battle Group Commander's role in Figure 2), allowing the Battle Group Commanders to serve as respective RADC's will more easily allow for the two carrier battle groups to operate in different geographic areas. Command and control relationships and unity of command will not suffer with this practice (Battle Group 1 or 2 star flag officers will report to a 3 star JFACC).

Figure 3 is only one possible Joint Force organized along functional areas. The actual situation will dictate whether the naval forces should be organized into a Carrier Task Force (CVTF) (comprised of both CVBG's) and Amphibious Ready Force (ARF) (comprised of both ARG's). In this circumstance, when the CVTF and ARF are operating in close proximity, there may be only one RADC (assigned to the senior Battle Group Commander) and further warfare commander duties delegated throughout the force.



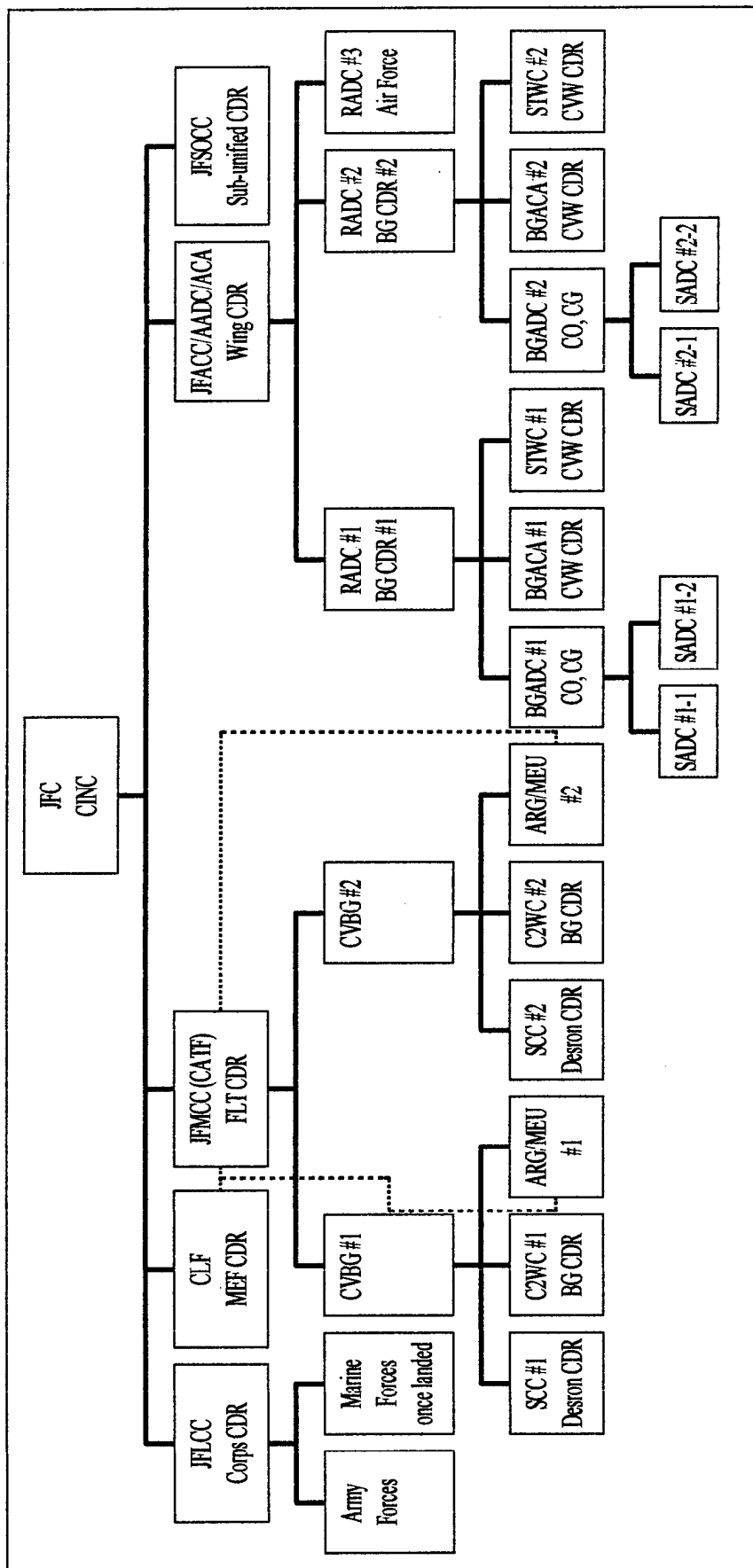


Figure 3: Joint Force Organization

## **VALUE OF JWC DOCTRINE TO THE JOINT FORCE COMMANDER**

“Forward...From the Sea” postulates that the “new direction for the Naval Service remains focused on our ability to project power from the sea in the critical littoral regions of the world. We remain committed to structuring our naval expeditionary forces so that they are inherently shaped for joint operations, with the emphasis on operations from the sea, tailored for national needs.”<sup>7</sup> Joint Warfare Commander doctrine will facilitate the Navy’s strategic concept. More importantly, it provides the Joint Force Commander with a ready-made Joint Task Force which can fully function as an enabling force in the event of a crisis. Given that the Navy-Marine Task Force is organized under the Joint Warfare Commander doctrine, minimal reorganization will occur as the other services join the effort.

It is not, however, enough that the CVBG/ARG force adopt the labels of the JWC doctrine—they must live it. Whenever the CVBG/ARG conducts work-ups, exercises or deploys, all tenets of joint warfare must be followed. Recognizing that a Navy-Marine Task Force is not in itself a Joint Task Force, nothing precludes it from training and operating as if it were. For example, it is all too often the case that once a joint exercise is complete, the CVBG will abandon the ATO process in favor of the daily air plan. Once this happens, the Air Warfare Commander stops acting like an AADC and the Carrier Airwing Commander stops acting like an ACA. Operating jointly is a perishable art that must be continuously practiced.

Joint Warfare Commander doctrine brings to the Joint Force Commander a flexibility in crisis response not previously available. Although the Navy-Marine Task

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<sup>7</sup> Forward...From the Sea, p. 8.

Force can be and has been quickly ordered to scenes of a crisis, one which is organized under the JWC doctrine will allow the Joint Force Commander to deploy other assets more quickly knowing that they can rapidly integrate into an established JTF. This means that force build-up can occur more rapidly and combat power can be employed more efficiently.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Evolving Toward 21<sup>st</sup> Century Operations**

The Joint Warfare Commander template for Navy-Marine Task Forces presented in this paper is not sufficient to change current Naval Command and Control doctrine. Only through testing, experimentation, and application will a viable and tailored JWC doctrine become reality. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed to examine JWC possibilities.

a. Implementation and Development. Recommend that a Navy-Marine Task Force which has not yet begun deployment work-ups adopt the Joint Warfare Commander concept presented. This task force should organize command relationships and warfare assignments based on a functionally organized Joint Task Force. Prior to the first Warfare Commander meeting chaired by the Task Force Commander, his staff should promulgate the task force organization based on JWC. This will allow warfare commanders to develop OPTASKs and procedures which fit the JWC organization vice the CWC organization.

b. Joint Exercise Testing. JWC requires testing in joint exercises similar to that conducted by deploying Navy-Marine Task Forces (i.e. Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX)) and is a logical extension of recommendation (a). However, a primary need

for change from CWC was the requirement for Naval Command and Control doctrine to integrate other service components into the Navy-Marine Task Force, integrate the Navy-Marine Task Force into an established Joint Task Force, mirror accepted Joint Task Force command structures and minimize reorganization within the Navy-Marine Task Force once operations are expanded. Therefore, CINCs and Fleet Commanders have a vested interest in developing JWC to meet these requirements. More importantly, the concept must be tested under the assumptions contained in Figure 3; multiple CVBG's/ARG's conducting amphibious operations with a MEB or larger size force. It is difficult to schedule an exercise of this magnitude given today's OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO restrictions. However, there are a number of possibilities which should be explored:

(1) A Second Fleet deploying Navy-Marine Task Force will conduct two major fleet exercises in preparation for deployment: Composite Unit Training Exercise (COMPTUEX) in the Puerto Rican Operating Area and Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) in the Virginia Capes Operating Area. Typically, the next deploying Navy-Marine Task Force will conduct JTFEX within weeks of its relief which has conducted COMPTUEX. Joining these two Navy-Marine Task Forces into a larger exercise might provide sufficient forces (in conjunction with Army and Air Force assets) to meet the requirements of a Joint Force presented in Figure 3. An additional benefit to this level of effort in a joint exercise is that the CINC, as JFC, is also involved. In the above example, USACOM would be JFC. A limitation to this method is that the exercise must be constructed such that deployment certification requirements are met (airwing blue water certification, certification of the MEU as Special Operations Capable,

individual unit readiness, etc).

(2) Adjust schedules for deploying task force and on-station task force such that there is enough overlap to conduct a Joint Exercise proposed above. For example, in the Mediterranean, EUCOM would act as JFC.

(3) Utilize on-station SIXTHFLT and SEVENTHFLT task forces in a Joint Exercise commanded by either EUCOM or CENTCOM.

(4) Conduct shore-based exercise/wargame with constructed forces. This recommendation might also be a preparatory experiment prior to options listed in (1) through (3).

c. Doctrine Development and Promulgation. Once testing and experimentation is complete, formal promulgation of approved Naval Command and Control doctrine is required. Once promulgated, Navy-Marine Task Forces must organize, train, exercise and conduct all operations under approved procedures tailored for joint operations. Although this recommendation appears logical, current Navy efforts to revise Naval Command and Control doctrine as been stymied with the lack of formal guidance. The Chief of Naval Operations message, "Command Relations for Naval Forces", clearly illustrates the vacuum which exists regarding Naval Command and Control in the future.

"While these actions have provided important test and evaluation feedback, and are to be applauded, the NETF concept should be considered to have been only a waypoint along a path that merges the proven strengths of the traditional CATF/CLF relationship with the command relationships required by future operational situations. In that spirit, the implementation of any doctrinal concepts evaluated under the NETF label which do not have service approval, for other than approved experimentation or exercise purposes, is considered premature. The term Naval Expeditionary Task Force (NETF) itself will no longer be used."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Command Relations for Naval Forces," Chief of Naval Operations, 261739ZSEP97.

The result thus far, despite years of review and experimentation, is that Navy-Marine Task Forces continue to operate under Naval Command and Control doctrine which was developed to support blue water operations and which does not fit into joint operations. Regardless of the level of care, detail and research conducted in developing Naval Command and Control doctrine, unless a doctrine is approved and promulgated, the change will be revolutionary not evolutionary to our Navy-Marine Task Forces.

## **2. Joint Vision 2010**

In keeping with “Joint Vision 2010”, Naval Command and Control doctrine must continue to evolve to exploit emerging technologies and capabilities.

“In order to make optimum use of the technologies and operational concepts discussed earlier, we must carefully examine the traditional criteria governing span of control and organizational layers for the Services, commands, and Defense agencies. We will need organizations and processes that are agile enough to exploit emerging technologies and respond to diverse threats and enemy capabilities. As we move forward, we may require further reductions in supervision and centralized direction.”<sup>9</sup>

Emerging technologies such as faster and more capable communication suites (EHF, SHF, video teleconferencing, computer networking, etc), Cooperative Engagement Concept (CEC), Theater Ballistic Missile Defense from afloat units, and afloat Area Air Defense Commander suites (AADC onboard Aegis Cruisers) begin to blur the lines of tactical control to operational control of weapon systems outside of traditional Naval Command and Control concepts. For example, Naval Command and Control of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must allow for the possibility of operational commanders directly employing what have been traditional tactical weapon platforms (Theater Ballistic Missile Defense from Aegis cruisers).

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<sup>9</sup> Joint Vision 2010, p. 31.

## CONCLUSION

General Charles C. Krulak, Commandant, United States Marine Corps, postulates that "preparing the naval services for the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires more than tough training or procurement of new equipment. It requires an institutional commitment to change. Laminating future technology on current doctrine and organizations is not the answer."<sup>10</sup> This paper developed the requirements for Naval Command and Control doctrine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, explored future command relationships within the Navy-Marine Task Force, presented a template for the Joint Warfare Commander doctrine, and recommended methods to test, expand and implement JWC. Naval Command and Control doctrine must fully integrate the Navy-Marine Task Force within the Joint environment, retain unique capabilities inherent to operating Naval Forces at sea, and be flexible enough to incorporate future technologies and Joint doctrinal changes.

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<sup>10</sup> General Charles C. Krulak, USMC, "Operational Maneuver from the Sea," Proceedings, January 1997, p. 31.

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